not implementing the guideliness of National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Commission fully;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to ensure the implementation of guidelines and decisions of the Commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The National Commission for SCs and STs have not issued by guidelines to PSUs^Banks^inancial Institutions and KVS.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**Rehabilitation Measures for Blinds**

†1934. SHRI RAT MOHINDER SINGH:
SHRI BALWANTI SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of blind persons is increasing because of continuously increasing mal-nutrition in the country and their rehabilitation measures need to be stepped up;

(b) whether Government have made any assessment of the increasing number of blind persons; and

(c) if so, the number thereof and the number of projects being run at present by Government for rehabilitation of these blind persons alongwith the number of persons benefited from these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The prevalence of blindness and the absolute number of blind persons due to malnutrition is not increasing. National Surveys (1986-89) indicated decrease in blindness due to malnutrition from 2% in 1971-74 to 0.39% in 1986-89. However, the Government is continuously trying to step up the rehabilitation measures for the blind.

(c) It is estimated that there are over 12 million blind persons in India. The number of projects being run at present by the Ministry of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Social Justice & Empowerment for rehabilitation of disabled persons including the blind are mentioned below:

(i) District Rehabilitation Centre.
(ii) Special Employment Exchanges and Special CeUs.
(iii) NIVH, Dehradun and its Regional Centres.

**Loan Received by SCsCTs from NSCSTFDC in Tamil Nadu**

1935. SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of SCsCTs who received loans from National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Devleopment Corporation in Tamil Nadu during the years 1997, 1998 and 1999; and

(b) the amount of money released by the Corporation during each of the above mentioned years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The number of beneficiaries who received loans from National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation in Tamil Nadu during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 is 298,542 and 275 respectively.

(b) The Corporation released Rs. 345.14 lakhs, 810.36 lakhs and 484.37 lakhs to Tamil Nadu during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 respectively.

(iv) Scheme to promote voluntary action for persons with disabilities,
(v) Special Schools for the Visually Handicapped,
(vi) National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation,
(vi) Regional Rehabilitation Training Centre,
(viii) Rehabilitation Council of India.
(ix) Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India Limited,
(x) Assistance to disabled persons for purchase/fitting of aids and appliances.